



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Agenda

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager 860-441-6630

Representative Town Meeting

Representatives Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Michael Collins, Nancy M. Congdon, Warren T. Cooper, Syma Ebbin, Peter Fairbank, Nancy E. Gilly, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Keith L. Hedrick, Damon Q. Helme, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Michael Dean Johnson, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Elizabeth Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Karen F. Morton, Scott Newsome, Dana C. Parfitt, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Kevin Power, Kristen L. Powers, Don Pratt, Betty A. Prochaska, John F. Scott IV, Jack Sebastian, Dana S. Semeraro, Jennifer Smuts, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, Cheryl Tilney, Thomas W. Vivirito, and Robert A. Warn

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex-Community Room 1

Regular Meeting

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL BY TOWN CLERK

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

C. ORGANIZATION OF TWENTY-SEVENTH RTM

1. Administration of oath to all Representatives by Town Clerk.

2. Adoption of Rules

2009-0310 Adoption of RTM Rules

RESOLUTION APPROVING ADOPTION OF RULES & PROCEDURES OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH RTM

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rules and Procedures of the Twenty-sixth RTM are temporarily adopted as the Rules and Procedures of the Twenty-seventh RTM elected November 3, 2009.

3. Election of Moderator

4. Oath of Office and presentation of gavel to Moderator

5. Brief recess to allow Moderator to review correspondence, etc.

D. PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 18, 2009

F. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

This is the portion of the RTM agenda where the RTM welcomes comments from citizens. Each presentation should be limited to ten minutes or less, and citizens should, if possible, submit written comments. Presentations should be limited to matters pertinent to Groton. The Moderator, or members through the Moderator, shall ask questions only in order to clarify the speaker's presentation. Responses may be given by the Moderator and/or by the Town Manager. Citizens should make their presentations from the lectern and state their names and addresses for the record.

G. APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY RULES & PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

2009-0309 Appointment of Temporary RTM Rules & Procedures Committee

RESOLUTION APPOINTING TEMPORARY RULES & PROCEDURES COMMITTEE TO

PREPARE RULES FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH RTM

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Moderator hereby appoints the following as a temporary Rules & Procedures Committee to review and recommend Rules and Procedures for the Twenty-seventh RTM:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

H. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS**I. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:****1. Financial report****2. Monthly briefing****J. OTHER BUSINESS****2009-0190 Preliminary RTM Budget Discussion**

PRELIMINARY BUDGET DISCUSSION FOR RTM'S FY2011 BUDGET PROCESS

Legislative History**11/18/2009 Representative Town Meeting Discussed**

Rep. Sebastian reviewed a spreadsheet that he prepared and provided to all members in their monthly packets. The memo addresses the grand levy over the last ten years. He noted that he based his spreadsheet on figures provided by the Finance Director. He feels that the RTM is responsible for the Grand Levy because the RTM approves the Town spending each year. He commented that the RTM is the last defense for holding the line against budget and tax increases. He stated that he has received comments from residents who are concerned about the increase in taxes each year, especially individuals on fixed incomes. He suggested that the RTM needs to discuss now what next year's budget bottom line should be at the end of the 2010 budget deliberations.

Rep. Massett stated that every year there are requests for no tax increase. She clarified that past and current Town Managers have asked the RTM to suggest what services should be reduced or eliminated. She feels the RTM needs to think about making those type of suggestions to the Manager.

Rep. Smuts agreed with Rep. Sebastian. She noted that in addition to debt service, there are other items that the RTM has no control over, such as contracts and salaries. She feels the RTM needs to have a list of items or services which are within its control to help identify the items that the public is willing to have reduced or eliminated. She cited as possible examples a reduction in the library hours, or in police response time. She feels there are many things in the budget that citizens enjoy but that it is the job of the RTM to make the difficult decisions that result in reduced or eliminated services.

Rep. Ebbin stated that she was pleased with the recent BOE teacher contract negotiations that included no wage increase for 2010. She commented that since the RTM has no involvement with contract negotiations for Town employees, the Council should follow this direction with Town employee contracts. She feels it is important to be equitable with teachers and Town employees. She does not want the teachers to be the only ones penalized by the current economic situation.

Rep. Cooper agreed with Rep. Sebastian and stated for the record that he does not want an increase in the budget this year.

The Town Manager responded to Rep. Sebastian's remarks concerning the grand levy, debt service and inflation levels. He stated that many factors have influenced the budget over the last ten years. He mentioned that the phase-in of the last revaluation adversely affected many residents and benefited others, and that the decrease in revenues from outside sources has increased dependency on local property tax. These issues have a far greater influence on the increase in taxes than the growth of the budget. He feels it is essential to identify the services that are important for the Town, since traditional revenue sources are no longer keeping pace or are being eliminated. He noted that in the past he has presented a reduced or level budget, and that the Council or RTM has added money back for services they did not want eliminated.

Rep. Peruzzotti commented that she was impressed with the reorganization and reduction to the library's budget last year. She feels that all Department Heads should be encouraged to make similar changes this year.

In response to Rep. Sebastian, the Town Manager distributed a spreadsheet comparing changes in the Consumer Price Index to changes in the adopted budget minus debt service over the past ten years. He responded to Rep. Peruzzotti that the library situation was a unique opportunity to reorganize and make changes to operations. He noted that every vacant position is scrutinized and the affected department is reviewed to see if changes, reorganization, or elimination of the position is possible. He confirmed that no job is automatically filled. He stated that he does not foresee a large number of retirements this budget year, nor does he anticipate an opportunity for reorganization similar to that at the library. He mentioned that Rep. Sebastian is suggesting a 0% tax levy budget for 2010 which would significantly affect the Town and most likely cause layoffs which most members do not support.

K. ADJOURNMENT